



Moving Beyond Risk Management: A Strength-Based Model of Sex Offender Treatment

A Review of

Rehabilitating Sexual Offenders: A Strength-Based Approach

by William L. Marshall, Liam E. Marshall, Geris A. Serran, and Matt D. O'Brien

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Reviewed by

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Rehabilitating Sexual Offenders: A Strength-Based Approach by Marshall, Marshall, Serran, and O'Brien is a welcome addition to the currently sparse availability of books on strength-based approaches for the treatment of sexual offenders, or, in fact, of any type of offender. In a sense, it represents the culmination of Bill Marshall's pioneering research-based practice with sex offenders and is a seamless integration of humanistic values and clinical science.

The book is divided into four sections: Introduction, Part I—Research and Theory on Sexual Offender Treatment, Part II—The Rockwood Psychological Services Programs, and Afterword: Summary and Implications for Future Treatment and Research. The introduction provides a theoretical context for the subsequent overviews of the literature on the effects of sexual offending, sexual offenders, limitations of current dominant treatment approaches with sexual offenders, and an overview of the Rockwood Psychological Services in Canada. The authors outline their positive psychology approach and their rationale, based on the literature and existing correctional rehabilitation frameworks such as the Good Lives Model (Ward & Maruna, 2007), for its use with sexual offenders.

Part I has five chapters that provide a useful description of theory and research on sexual offender treatment. The authors begin by outlining the background to the assessment of sexual offenders and their particular approach to assessment, case formulation, and evaluation. They suggest that assessment and formulation is a process that continues throughout treatment and are critical of front-end, overly intensive assessment protocols, which they believe are overly time-consuming and unnecessary.

A review of the available literature on various treatment procedures covers issues such as manualized versus guided programs, group versus individual therapy, closed versus rolling groups, and other treatment factors that must be decided upon for any treatment program, including duration and intensity of treatment, and the implications of these when one is balancing the risk, need, and responsivity principles. The authors also discuss the literature concerning personal and interpersonal variables that affect therapeutic relationships, including the importance of therapist characteristics for the quality of therapeutic alliances, engagement, and outcomes.

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is well reviewed in Chapter 4. CBT is a common therapeutic approach used by sexual offender programs but one that the authors argue often places unwarranted emphasis on the cognitive component at the expense of the behavioral. Marshall et al. stress that CBT is not simply about addressing cognitions but also incorporates behavioral acquisition and reduction techniques, and they point out that therapists play an important role in increasing desired behaviors through such techniques as modeling and reinforcement.

Furthermore, therapists can help with the generalization of therapy-imparted competencies through using such

techniques as role-plays and by ensuring that skills are practiced outside therapy. Attention is also drawn to the importance of emotions and emotional expression in the process of change, both frequently neglected in standard CBT programs for sex offenders. They conclude that better outcomes are likely to be associated with the inclusion of all three components in treatment.

In the final chapter of Part I, Marshall et al. reflect on the lack of research attention given to within-treatment goals and the difficulties of undertaking research in the area of sexual offender treatment (e.g., due to issues such as the ethics concerning the use of randomized controlled trials). This chapter also provides an overview of the efficacy of sex offender treatment, including outcomes from the Rockwood programs designed and run by the authors.

Part II outlines the implementation of the Rockwood positive approach to working with adult sexual offenders in three programs run by the authors. Having provided the research context in Part I, the authors provide a more detailed description of their programs while still interweaving descriptions of relevant literature when appropriate. They comment on weaknesses commonly evident in treatment programs arising from poor engagement and attrition.

Marshall et al. then introduce the Rockwood Preparatory Program, which was designed to overcome treatment resistance and assist with engagement and motivation. Chapter 7 (the longest chapter in the book, at 36 pages) provides a detailed description of the Rockwood Primary Program for sexual offenders, from the engagement phase through targeting criminogenic factors (i.e., dynamic risk factors), and finally self-management. They include a discussion of how the Primary Program is similar to, and where it differs from, other programs; as well, they support their rationale for specific program components with empirical evidence. Details are also provided about the integration of strength-based approaches such as positive psychology, motivational interviewing, and the adapted Good Lives model (Ward & Maruna, 2007).

One other Rockwood program, the Deniers' Program, is more briefly discussed in the last chapter of Part II. This program was developed for individuals who deny having committed sexual offenses. The rationale for its development is well described, and the authors highlight how it differs from the Primary Program.

Finally, the Afterword: Summary and Implications for Future Treatment and Research provides a concise summary of each chapter, including the key messages that the authors hope readers will take from each chapter. The authors also briefly comment on the potential benefits of the application of positive psychology to sexual offender treatment and the opportunities that it will provide for future research.

In conclusion, Marshall et al. have produced an excellent, well-written book that leads the reader easily through clinical theory to the detailed application of a strength-based approach to the treatment of sex offenders. It provides the reader with a basic understanding of positive psychology and strength-based perspectives and clear examples of how these can be integrated in treatment with sexual offenders.

For clinicians who are new to the area, this book is likely to provide them with sufficient detail to understand how a positive psychology approach can be applied to sexual offender treatment. For those who already work in the field, it should prove to be a useful resource to help expand or adapt their programs using strength-based ideas.

Bill Marshall is one of forensic psychology's leading theorists and clinical researchers, and he and his team have once again helped to set the treatment and research agenda for sexual offending. This is a thought-provoking, illuminating, and, most important, very practical book that should prove to be of immense value in tackling sexual abuse.

Reference

Ward, T., & Maruna, S. (2007). *Rehabilitation: Beyond the risk paradigm*. London, England: Routledge.

The Risk Need Responsivity Model of Offender Rehabilitation - Eric. The Risk Need Responsivity Model of Offender Rehabilitation - ERIC. As most incarcerated sexual offenders ultimately return to the community, effective treatment and management is the key to the prevention of future reoffending. Adopting the GLM in the Assessment and Management of Sexual Offenders Assessment Sexual offender risk assessment should be seen as an intervention in its own right, as it is a process that is capable of bringing about change. A well-conducted and collaborative risk assessment can prompt an offender to start contemplating about change or help him gain insight into difficulties that were not previously recognized. Request PDF | Moving beyond risk management: A strength-based model of sex offender treatment. | Rehabilitating Sexual Offenders: A Strength-based Approach by Marshall, Marshall, Serran, and O'Brien is a welcome addition to the currently | Rehabilitating Sexual Offenders: A Strength-based Approach by Marshall, Marshall, Serran, and O'Brien is a welcome addition to the currently sparse availability of books on strength-based approaches for the treatment of sexual offenders, or in fact, any type of offender. Given that sex offenders have been found to serve longer prison terms compared with other types of violent criminals, it has been suggested that the influence of imprisonment may impact subsequent reoffending.